

26788 - Woman working in a home for the elderly

the question

Is it permissible for a women to work in a home for the elderly that is mixed, men and women together, where the workers have to wash the people, both men and women, and change their diapers, or she may have to give them forbidden drinks and meals containing pork? Can a Muslim woman work in this place if she avoids giving the people alcohol and haraam meats? Also please note that she is not allowed to wear anything but a scarf on her head and a knee-length shirt over trousers, on grounds of necessity. Some people have told the women that doing this kind of work is better than being dependent on the social agencies that offer help to families whose head is out of work.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

With regard to offering alcohol and pork to the residents of the home for the elderly, this is undoubtedly haraam, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) cursed ten types of people with regard to alcohol, including the one who carries it and the one who pours it. It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) cursed ten types of people with regard to wine: the one who presses (the grapes), the one for whom it is pressed, the one who drinks it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried, the one who pours it, the one who sells it and consumes its price, the one who buys it and the one for whom it is bought." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1295; Abu Dawood, 3674). So it is not permissible to carry it or serve it and to be paid for that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When Allaah forbids people to eat something, He also forbids its price to them [i.e., they are not allowed to sell it]." (Classed

Islam Question & Answer

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as saheeh by al-Albaani – may Allaah have mercy on him) in Saheeh Abi Dawood, no. 2978).

It is also well known that alcohol and pork are forbidden in the Qur’aan.

There remain two further issues of concern:

The first is that the Muslim woman who works in this home is not wearing complete shar’i hijaab.

The second is that washing the elderly people and changing their diapers will lead to seeing and touching their ‘awrahs. This is permissible in cases of necessity, but I do not think they will appoint men to take care of men and women to take care of women; usually they bring all the people together in one place and both women and men work with both sexes.

So my advice is that a Muslim woman, in particular, should not work in this place. This work is also not desirable because it involves dealing with impure things. Accepting help from the social institution, even though it involves the humiliation of the Muslim taking aid from the kaafirs, is still easier to bear than this work which involves going against sharee’ah.

We ask Allaah to cause Islam and the Muslims to prevail. And Allaah is the Source of help.